



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
District of Maryland

Rod J. Rosenstein
United States Attorney

Vickie E. LeDuc
Public Information Officer

36 S. Charles Street
Fourth Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2692

410-209-4800
TTY/TDD: 410-962-4462
410-209-4885
FAX 410-962-3091
Vickie.LeDuc@usdoj.gov

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CONTACT AUSA VICKIE E. LEDUC or
MARCIA MURPHY at (410) 209-4885

BALTIMORE MAN INDICTED IN IDENTITY THEFT FRAUD SCHEME

Used Relative's Identity to Steal \$206,369 in Social Security Disability Benefits

Baltimore, Maryland - A grand jury indicted Michael Wayne Christian, age 41, of Baltimore, for theft of government property, social security number fraud and aggravated identity theft in connection with a scheme to fraudulently obtain \$206,369 in social security disability benefits, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein.

According to the five count indictment, Christian was sporadically employed from 1984 to 1990. After 1990, he had no earnings history in his own identity. On October 10, 1992 Christian was injured and became a quadriplegic. From 1993 to April 2007, he used a relative's identity and work history to obtain disability benefits on his own behalf, and children's benefit payments on behalf of his son and daughter. From 1999 to January 2004, his wife also received spousal disability benefit payments, using the relative's identity.

In response to a Social Security investigation into why the same social security account number and other identifiers were being used by two individuals, one employed and one drawing social security disability benefits, Christian allegedly falsely certified in September 2001, August 2004 and March 2007 that he was the victim of identity theft and that the true victim, his relative, was using his social security account number without authorization.

As a result of the scheme, Christian is alleged to have stolen a total of \$206,369.60 from the Social Security Administration.

Christian faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison followed by three years of supervised release for theft of government property, five years in prison followed by three years of supervised release for social security number fraud, and a mandatory minimum of two years in prison consecutive to any sentence imposed on the previous offenses. He will have his initial appearance and arraignment in federal district court on February 14, 2008.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed

innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked the Social Security Administration - Office of the Inspector General for its investigative work. Mr. Rosenstein commended Assistant United States Attorney Tamera L. Fine, who is prosecuting the case.